



CITY OF LODI

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

AGENDA TITLE: Authorize program to allow City utility customers to donate funds to the Lodi Electric Assistance Program (LEAP)

MEETING DATE: May 1, 1996

PREPARED BY: Finance Director

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorize the Finance Department to begin a pilot program to allow City utility customers to donate \$1 and up in even dollar amounts per month to "LEAP", Lodi's "Reach" program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Pacific Gas & Electric provides its' utility customers with the opportunity to donate to "Reach". This is a program managed by the Salvation Army to provide one time assistance to utility customers in paying their utility bill. In the past, the Lodi branch of the Salvation Army has used donations made by PG&E to assist Lodi's Electric Utility customers.

The Reach Program has benefited both the City and the City's utility customers. The customer receives assistance on a one time basis in paying their utility bill when they can not pay their electric bill due to economic hardship and their utilities are scheduled to be turned off for non-payment. The customer is also provided with financial counseling and may be referred to other agencies for additional help. The City benefits by receiving payment for delinquent bills and has a resource to refer people for counseling and assistance. Without this resource, City staff would have to spend a significant amount of time assisting a few people.

PG&E has been very helpful in assisting the Finance Department with a Lodi version of the Reach Program, but has requested we do not use the "Reach" name. Under the pilot program, the City would allow utility customers to donate from \$1 and up in even dollar amounts on their utility bill to "LEAP", Lodi's Reach type program. The funds collected would be forwarded to the Lodi Branch of the Salvation Army to provide financial assistance to City utility customers under the same rules and conditions of the Reach Program sponsored by PG&E, except the LEAP program would also provide financial assistance to pay water, sewer and garbage bills.

If this recommendation is approved by the City Council, staff would begin discussions with the Salvation Army to establish an agreement as to the use of the donations and procedures to be implemented for fund transfers. The program would be advertised in the June City newsletter, and implemented July 1, 1996.

FUNDING: None

Vicky McAthie
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Finance Director

APPROVED:

H. Dixon Flynn
H. Dixon Flynn -- City Manager